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September 23, 1980

Dear Senator Laxalt:

The Secretary has asked me to thank you for your inquiry of September 8 on behalf of concerning the fate of Raoul Wallenberg. e6

The Department's records show that Mr. Wallenberg was assigned to the Swedish mission in Budapest, Hungary during World War II and disappeared in January 1945 after Soviet troops arrived. The Soviet Union responded in February 1957 to repeated inquiries by the Swedish Government by stating that Mr. Wallenberg died in a Moscow prison on July 17, 1947. Although the Swedish Government officially raised the Wallenberg case on numerous subsequent occasions, citing several witnesses who claimed to have seen him alive during the 1950's, the Soviets have provided no additional information.

The U.S. Government has been interested in the Wallenberg case since it first came to light at the end of World War II. We have sought a full and adequate response about Mr. Wallenberg's fate from the Soviet Government a number of times, most recently in December 1979. That initiative resulted in a formal written reply from the Soviets in February 1980 reaffirming their claim that Mr. Wallenberg died in 1947. They also stated that they had informed the Swedish Government directly of their latest findings and suggested that they would have no further information on this matter in the future. Given the current state of U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations and the tone of the February reply, we doubt the Soviets would be responsive to further inquiries about Mr. Wallenberg.

We have also attempted to gain information in other ways. U.S. officials conducted extensive interviews with

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The Honorable
Paul Laxalt,
United States Senate

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the five Soviet dissidents exchanged for two Soviet spies in April 1979. None of the five ex-prisoners could confirm or lend credence to rumors that Mr. Wallenberg is still alive.

Sincerely,

(w)

J. Brian Atwood
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Enclosure:

Correspondence returned.

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